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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by Imam Ali's Popular Students Relief Society, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[7 March 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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The Assembly of the Marginalized Women

Formation of the Assembly

Imam Ali's Popular Student Relief Society (established in 1999) launched the Assembly of the Marginalized Women in the fall of 2015. The first meeting was held with the attendance of women from six marginalized areas of Tehran in the winter of 2016, and today, representative women from 12 marginalized neighbourhoods of the province are active in these meetings.

Reasons for the formation of the Assembly

The Assembly of the Marginalized Women began by asking a question, "why do not the voices of the immigrant, injured, and vulnerable women go to the parliament, and why are not the laws related to their status being amended or approved?" Therefore, the Women's Assembly has provided a structure for the attendance of these women to represent the issues and problems of the community on behalf of their ethnicity, neighbourhood, or vulnerable group. And, with the help of the facilitators, to sum up and submit their proposed rules at the end of the meeting and present them to the relevant authorities through the seminars and programs of this NGO as well as to enforce them in the atmosphere of the Imam Ali's Society.

Topics

So far, meetings have been held on the following topics and for some topics, several sessions have been assigned:

- Legal issues and treatment problems of the immigrant and asylum seeker women (Afghan and Pakistani)
- Violence against women
- Child marriage
- Child abuse
- Nutrition poverty

How to choose the representative women

The representative women are selected through the relief centres of the Imam Ali's Society from the marginalized areas of Tehran province, which are called Iranian Homes. Imam Ali's Society has 35 Iranian homes throughout Iran. In fact, dozens of injured and vulnerable women in these centres are receiving employment, skill learning, treatment, and art services. One of the women in each centre, which can accurately reflect the issues and problems of their matched group, attends the women's monthly assembly alongside other elected women.

These women include street venders, wives of addicted men, female-headed households, immigrants, asylum seekers, women involved in domestic violence, and women who are rescued from addiction.

Purpose of the Assembly

The Assembly of the Marginalized Women has been formed with the aim of delivering directly the voices of the injured and vulnerable women to the community and legislators, creating self-confidence among these women, and encouraging them to improve their skills and level of consciousness, changing the status of these women from the client to the effective person in the community.

Outlook

It is hoped that by expanding this awareness, holding the annual assembly takes place with the attendance of the representative women from different provinces of the country in the near future. The outlook for this assembly is to hold meetings with the attendance of the women from the war-torn and affected countries in which the relief activities of Imam Ali's Society are taking place including Afghanistan, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Pakistan.